



The Longest Night: A Military History of the Civil War

David J Eicher

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Like no other conflict in our history, the Civil War casts a long shadow onto modern America," writes David Eicher. In his compelling new account of that war, Eicher gives us an authoritative modern single-volume battle history that spans the war from the opening engagement at Fort Sumter to Lee's surrender at Appomattox (and even beyond, to the less well-known but conclusive surrender of Confederate General Edmund Kirby Smith in Galveston, Texas, on June 2, 1865). Although there are other one-volume histories of the Civil War -- most notably James M. McPherson's Pulitzer Prize-winning "Battle Cry of Freedom," which puts the war in its political, economic, and social context -- "The Longest Night" is strictly a military history. It covers hundreds of engagements on land and sea, and along rivers. The Western theater, often neglected in accounts of the Civil War, and the naval actions along the coasts and major rivers are at last given their due. Such major battles as Gettysburg, Antietam, and Chancellorsville are, of course, described in detail, but Eicher also examines lesser-known actions such as Sabine Pass, Texas, and Fort Clinch, Florida. The result is a gripping popular history that will fascinate anyone just learning about the Civil War while at the same time offering more than a few surprises for longtime students of the War Between the States. "The Longest Night" draws on hundreds of sources and includes numerous excerpts from letters, diaries, and reports by the soldiers who fought the war, giving readers a real sense of life -- and death -- on the battlefield. In addition to the main battle narrative, Eicher analyzes each side's evolving strategy and examines the tactics of Lee, Grant, Johnston, Sherman, and other leading figures of the war. He also discusses such militarily significant topics as prisons, railroads, shipbuilding, clandestine operations, and the expanding role of African Americans in the war. "The Longest Night" is a riveting, indispensable history of the war that James McPherson in the Foreword to this book calls "the most dramatic, violent, and fateful experience in American history."

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